

Contradictions of Neoliberal Planning

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Tuna Taşan-Kok · Guy Baeten
Editors

Contradictions of Neoliberal Planning

Cities, Policies, and Politics



Springer

Editors

Dr. Tuna Taşan-Kok
Department of City and Regional Planning
Middle East Technical University
Ankara
Turkey

OTB Research Institute for the Built
Environment
Delft University of Technology
Jaffalaan 9, 2628 BX
Delft
The Netherlands
m.t.tasan-kok@tudelft.nl

Dr. Guy Baeten
University of Lund
Department of Social & Economic
Geography
Sölvegatan 12
223 62 Lund
Sweden
guy.baeten@keg.lu.se

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Kop van Zuid (Rotterdam): A product of Neoliberal planning

Preface

The idea for this book on the contradictions of neoliberal planning first came about in April 2008 while the editors were relaxing on a sunny terrace on Massachusetts Avenue in Boston at the culmination of a long and successful Association of American Geographers (AAG) session that they had organised. The credit crunch had not yet become a major topic of discussion, although the first signs of the looming crisis had been brought up during the session. Later, while sitting on the lawn of the beautiful, sunny garden of the AAG venue in Washington DC and discussing the final arrangements for this book in April 2010, the devastating consequences of the credit crunch had become clearly visible and were the subject of various conference sessions, meaning that while writing and editing this book we were experiencing first hand just how the contradictions of neoliberalism could affect our cities and lives.

The financial crisis and its impact on cities and urban planning may not feature prominently in this book, but we nevertheless hope to open up unexplored conceptual grounds by explicitly bringing together ‘neoliberalism’ and ‘planning’ to fill a major gap in planning theory. Our primary focus is to underline the contradictions created by the forces of neoliberal policies in planning theory and practice. How does planning in well-established welfare societies deal with neoliberalisation processes? To what extent does that eat into the provision of welfare? What is the stake of the state in planning in a neoliberalising world? To what extent and in what ways do transnational organisations take over in local planning processes? What alternatives do social movements provide for the ‘self-help’ society? How does privatisation affect our everyday lives, and what environmental risks does it generate? In what ways do property-led planning practices clash with public interest? How and why has neoliberalism diffused across the globe, as if there were no alternative? Bringing together a wide variety of case studies, the book aims to provide (partial) answers to these questions, with a focus on the contradictions stemming from the neoliberalisation of urban development. It is hoped that this will be a first step in laying bare the realities of ‘neoliberal planning’.

As Friedrich Hayek once remarked, the world will be changed by second-hand dealers in ideas. We dedicate this book to the new, open-minded generation of planners, who will hopefully provide us with alternatives; and we look forward to future AAG sessions now that they have moved beyond the (crucial) phase of mere critique

and can now focus on dreaming up new, powerful planning frameworks that will contribute to more justice in the city.

Our thanks go in the first place to the authors of this book for their valuable contributions and patience throughout the lengthy publishing process; and we also offer our gratitude to Evelien Bakker and Bernadette Deelen-Mans, both at Springer, for their continued support and patience in this project; to Prof. Dr. Ayda Eraydın and Prof. Dr. İlhan Tekeli, and Prof. Dr. Sezai Göksu for their kind help and suggestions; and to Nancy van Weesep, Colin Sutcliffe, and Çiğdem Özönat and Deniz Altay for their editorial support. We would also like to thank The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning, and OTB Research Institute for the Built Environment (TUDelft) for co-financing this book, and to the participants at our 2008 AAG session in Boston for inspiring and motivating us to publish it.

Ankara, Turkey
Malmö, Sweden
April 2011

Tuna Taşan-Kok
Guy Baeten

Contents

1	Introduction: Contradictions of Neoliberal Urban Planning	1
	Tuna Taşan-Kok	
2	Normalising Neoliberal Planning: The Case of Malmö, Sweden . .	21
	Guy Baeten	
3	Neoliberal Urban Policy, Aspirational Citizenship and the Uses of Cultural Distinction	43
	Mike Raco	
4	Contradictions in the Neoliberal Policy Instruments: What Is the Stance of the State?	61
	Ayda Eraydın	
5	Transnational Neoliberalisation and the Role of Supranational Trade Agreements in Local Urban Policy Implementation: The Case of the European Union	79
	Tuna Taşan-Kok and Willem Korthals Altes	
6	Neoliberal Urban Movements?: A Geography of Conflict and Mobilisation over Urban Renaissance in Antwerp, Belgium . .	99
	Maarten Loopmans and Toon Dirckx	
7	Social Entrepreneurship in Urban Planning and Development in Montreal	117
	Barbara van Dyck	
8	Washing Their Hands of It? Auckland Cities' Risk Management of Formerly Horticultural Land as Neoliberal Responsibilisation	133
	Cameron Smith and Brad Coombes	
9	Accumulation by Dispossession and Neoliberal Urban Planning: 'Landing' the Mega-Projects in Taipei	151
	Sue-Ching Jou, Anders Lund Hansen, and Hsin-Ling Wu	

10	Neoliberalism, Shallow Dreaming and the Unyielding	
	Apartheid City	173
	Mark Oranje	
11	Neoliberal Planning: Does It Really Exist?	205
	Guy Baeten	
Index	213

Contributors

Guy Baeten Department of Social and Economic Geography, Lund University, 22362 Lund, Sweden, guy.baeten@keg.lu.se

Brad Coombes School of Environment, The University of Auckland, Auckland PB 92019, New Zealand, b.coombes@auckland.ac.nz

Toon Dirckx Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, KULeuven, Celestijnenlaan 3001, Leuven, toon.dirckx@ees.keuleuven.be

Barbara van Dyck Departement Architectuur, Catholic University of Leuven, Heverlee, Belgium; University of Antwerp, Antwerpen, Belgium, barbaravdyck@gmail.com

Ayda Eraydin Department of City and Regional Planning, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, ayda@metu.edu.tr

Sue-Ching Jou Department of Geography, National Taiwan University, 10617 Taipei, Taiwan, jouchen@ntu.edu.tw

Willem Korthals Altes OTB Research Institute for the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology, Delft, The Netherlands, W.K.KorthalsAltes@tudelft.nl

Maarten Loopmans Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, KULeuven, Celestijnenlaan, 3001, Leuven, Maarten.loopmans@ees.kuleuven.be

Anders Lund Hansen Department of Human Geography, Lund University, 22362 Lund, Sweden, anders.lund_hansen@keg.lu.se

Mark Oranje Department of Town and Regional Planning, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa, mark.oranje@up.ac.za

Mike Raco Bartlett School of Planning, University College London, WC1H 0QB London, UK, m.raco@ucl.ac.uk

Cameron Smith Ministry for the Environment, Wellington 6143, New Zealand, cameron.smith@mfe.govt.nz

Tuna Taşan-Kok Department of City and Regional Planning, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey; OTB Research Institute for the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology, Jaffalaan 9, 2628 BX, Delft, The Netherlands, m.t.tasan-kok@tudelft.nl

Hsin-Ling Wu Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Kainan University, 33857 Taoyuan, Taiwan, geoling@mail.knu.edu.tw

List of Figures

1.1	Path-dependent contradictions of neoliberal planning	13
2.1	Location of and plan for Hyllie	27
2.2	a Malmö's migration balances (2006). b Immigration in Malmö by region of origin (2007)	29
2.3	The Örespectacle	34
6.1	Major urban development projects in Antwerp (2000–2008)	107
6.2	Contested urban development projects and grassroots mobilisations in Antwerp 2000–2008	109
7.1	The local newspaper announces that CPR is ready to sell half of its property at Angus to the CDEC	124
8.1	Social status of 'Historical Horticultural Sites,' Auckland City	140
8.2	Social status of 'Historical Horticultural Sites,' Waitakere City	141
8.3	Spatial coincidence of historical contamination and social deprivation	146
9.1	Conceptual framework	155
9.2	Locations of four large-scale UDPs	159
9.3	Transition of developmental goals and key events for the four projects	160

List of Tables

1.1	Scope and role of urban planning by political-economic regime (1960s–1990s)	4
1.2	Specific contradictions of the neoliberal state	13
1.3	Contradictions of neoliberal planning as presented in this book	16
3.1	Core policy definitions of low and high aspirational spaces	51
4.1	Recent legislation that increased fragmentation in planning by providing special planning rights to different central government institutions in the Istanbul city region	70
6.1	Third way urban development and contestation in Antwerp (2000–2008)	114
9.1	Deregulation and privatised legislations in Taiwan since the late of 1980s	156

About the Authors

Guy Baeten joined the Geography Department at Lund in 2004. He has previously held a lectureship at the Department of Geography and Sociology (University of Strathclyde, Glasgow) and research posts at the School of Geography (Oxford University) and the Institute for Urban and Regional Planning (University of Leuven, Belgium). He has a D.Phil in Geography from the University of Oxford, and a BA in Sociology and Masters in Urban Planning, both from the University of Leuven. He is editor of *Geografiska Annaler B*, and book review editor for *European Planning Studies*. Guy Baeten has published scientific articles and a book on urban planning, transport planning and problems of ‘sustainability’.

Brad Coombes is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Environment, The University of Auckland, New Zealand. His research focuses on matters of environmental justice, particularly in respect of Maori – the indigenous population of New Zealand. He is currently Chair of the Indigenous Knowledges Peoples and Rights Commission of the International Geographical Union, and Co-Director of a UoA Thematic Research Initiative – *Te Whare Kura* (Indigenous Knowledges Peoples and Identities).

Toon Dirckx is a Ph.D. student and research assistant in the division of Urban and Social Geography at the Department for Earth and Environmental Sciences of the Catholic University of Leuven. His main research focus is on housing provision, urban policies and the socio-economic context linked with its form.

Barbara van Dyck is a Post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Architecture, Urbanism and Spatial Planning at K.U. Leuven and associated researcher at the Department of Transport and Regional Economics at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. Motivated by a concern to understand and impact on spatial transformation practices, her research focuses on the political economy of spatial development, local development, urban waste land and urban social movements.

Ayda Eraydin is Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Middle East Technical University, Turkey. Her research interests are local economic development, socio-spatial dynamics of cities and regions and planning theory and practice. She is currently coordinating an URBAN-NET Project

'Sustainable Land Use Policies for Resilient Cities' 2009–2011, and contributing URBAN-NET project on 'Urban Tourism and Climate Change'. Some of her recent publications are 'Different forms of governance: responses of two metropolitan regions in Turkey to state restructuring', *Urban Affairs Review*, 2011, 47(1) 84–128, (co-author A. Ataöv), *Diversity matters: Immigrant entrepreneurship and contribution of different forms of social integration in economic performance of cities*, *European Planning Studies*, 2010, 18(4) 521–543 (co-author Tasan-Kok, T. and J. Vranken), 'Environmental governance for sustainable tourism development: Collaborative networks and organisation building in the Antalya tourism region', *Tourism Management*, 2010, 31(1) 113–124 (co-author Öztürk-Erkuş, H.), 'Network Governance for Competitiveness: The Role of Policy Networks in the Economic Performance of Settlements in the Izmir Region' *Urban Studies*, 45(11) 2291–2321 (co-authors Armatli-Köroğlu, B., Öztürk-Erkuş, H., Yaşar, S.S.), 'The impact of globalisation on different social groups: Competitiveness, social cohesion and spatial segregation in Istanbul', *Urban Studies*, 2008, 45(8) 1663–1691.

Sue-Ching Jou, Ph.D., is Professor in Geography at National Taiwan University. Her research interests are mainly in the fields of urban studies, including political economy of urban development, urban and regional governance, and geographies of sustainable city governance. Her recent research and publications focus on corporate landscapes and mega-projects of the global cities in East Asian countries.

Willem Korthals Altes is Professor in Land Development and managing director of the OTB Research Institute of the Built Environment at the Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands. His research centres on the relationship between planning and land markets, and deals with aspects as the role and position of local authorities, the way authorities may use legal regulations, the effect of the Single European Market on localised practices and the way how strategies can be evaluated and publishes research in this field in international academic peer-reviewed journals. He has a planning degree, and has worked between his PhD at the University of Amsterdam and his present position a few years with a consulting firm in Rotterdam.

Maarten Loopmans is Assistant Professor in Urban and Social Geography at the Department for Earth and Environmental Sciences of the Catholic University of Leuven. His research focuses on social planning, urban and neighbourhood policies and urban social movements in European cities.

Anders Lund Hansen, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor at Department of Human Geography, Lund University, Sweden. The title of his dissertation in Space wars and the new urban imperialism (2006) and the Wallander Foundation (Ph.D. thesis award) funds his present research on East Asian cities. Lund Hansen has published in Scandinavian and 'international' journals. His latest publication is a co-edited book in Swedish on David Harvey: *The new geography of uneven development* (2011).

Mark Oranje (Prof. Dr.) is the Head of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Pretoria. He is the author and co-author of numerous

academic papers, articles, chapters in books and technical reports. He has acted as a consultant to the Presidency, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the Human Sciences Research Council, the Human Rights Commission, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the Municipal Demarcation Board, numerous national and provincial government departments, municipalities and large private sector corporations on issues relating to municipal integrated development plans, local and regional economic development, municipal, provincial, national and supra-national planning, land use management, intergovernmental relations and the integration of land use and transport planning. His areas of specialisation are planning policy; development planning; provincial, national and supra-national planning; intergovernmental relations and the integration of land-use and transport planning.

Mike Raco is Professor of Urban Governance and Development in the Bartlett School of Planning, University College London. He has published widely on the topics of urban governance and regeneration, urban sustainability, and the politics of urban and regional economic development. Recent works include *Building Sustainable Communities: Spatial Policy and Labour Mobility in Post-war Britain* (Policy Press, Bristol), and *Regenerating London: Governance, Sustainability and Community in a Global City* (with Rob Imrie and Loretta Lees, Routledge, London).

Cameron Smith was formerly a Masters student in the School of Environment, The University of Auckland, New Zealand. Since, he has worked for the Environmental Risk Management Authority of New Zealand, before becoming a policy advisor in the Ministry for the Environment.

Tuna Taşan-Kok is Assistant Professor at Middle East Technical University, Department of City and Regional Planning, Ankara, Turkey. She has Ph.D. in Urban Geography from the University of Utrecht, M.Sc. in Regional Planning from the Middle East Technical University (METU), Turkey, and BA (Honrs.) in City and Regional Planning from Dokuz Eylul University, Turkey. She has been conducting and coordinating international comparative research for over a decade. She has previously held research posts at Polish and Hungarian Academy of Sciences, coordinated a research group at Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, and worked at Delft University of Technology, OTB Research Institute for the Built Environment, The Netherlands as a Senior Researcher. She has mainly published on the topics of globalisation, property market dynamics, entrepreneurial urban governance, multicultural cities, and property-led urban regeneration issues.

Hsin-Ling Wu, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor at Department of Tourism & Hospitality, Kainan University, Taiwan. She obtained her Ph.D. degree in Human Geography, National Taiwan University. Her dissertation, entitled 'The Nostalgia and Modernising Landscapes in Shanghai: transnational elites and global-city urbanism,' (2007) tried to deconstruct the changing landscapes of Asian global cities. Her research interests include global city urbanism, transformation of city landscape and place promotion.